

Programme Notes v Crewe

Welcome to this afternoon's match against Crewe Alexandra for what should be a very entertaining game between two in form teams. We hope the travelling supporters from Cheshire enjoy their visit to Cleethorpes and wish you all a safe journey home.

On the equivalent Saturday last season, we were away to Bury and lost comprehensively 4-0. With the news last week that Bury's membership of the EFL has been withdrawn it just goes to show how quickly fortunes can change in football. This whole sorry saga raises so many questions as to how something like this could happen to one of the leagues oldest clubs. In their statement about the decision the EFL stated that there would be a comprehensive investigation into the events at Bury over the last few years which is fine and hopefully it will provide the answers as to what happened but surely there needs to be a review of the EFL's own processes as well. It cannot be right that someone can take over a football club for £1 and then be allowed to run it into the ground in the way Steve Dale has done. The process for transfer of ownership is clearly not robust enough with no apparent check into proof of funds. This is obviously quite topical for us at the moment with potential change of ownership on the horizon. As we understand it, part of the process is for the EFL to do a review of the club's two year plan and then identify any shortfall should football fortunes take a dip. They then ask for assurance that this can be covered by the new owner should it be needed but all they then require is a letter rather than something like a bond or a guarantee. Surely a major flaw in the process which seems to us easy to rectify. Supporters can rest assured that in the event of a takeover we will play our part on behalf of the fans to ensure the situation at Bury could never be repeated here.

There is another aspect to the Bury situation that few others have picked up on but is worthy of mention. By spending money that they didn't have they assembled a team that were certainly one of the best in the division ultimately finishing second and gaining promotion. This directly impacted the fortunes of other club's such as Mansfield who would have a strong argument that they should have been promoted instead. If Bury had worked to a budget based on realistic income (like we do) who knows where they would have finished, may be they would have been relegated instead of Notts County, obviously we will never know but the point is that when club's act irresponsibly like this there is an impact on other clubs and their fans.

None of this is the fault of the staff or supporters and we send our best wishes to them and hope that they can re-form and make their way back up the football pyramid. If there is any good to come out of this, it will be to ensure that this cannot happen again and hopefully with pressure from members clubs and supporters, via the Football Supporters Association, the necessary reforms will take place.

As we know Crewe have a fantastic reputation for developing their own talent and although we are not yet at the same level it is certainly a model we are trying to emulate as evidenced by the number of academy graduates we now have in the squad. As part of this philosophy Crewe also have a reputation for playing attractive football and so today will be a big test for us and as ever our support can make the difference. Enjoy the match. UTM

